

[Sarah Jones]

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Editor

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As I stepped on the improvised porch at the Jones house one of the boards turned, my foot went through and I had a fall. Virginia called to John, who, it seems, is the builder of this addition and told him that he would have to tear the thing off the house or some one would get killed.

"I aint goin' to tear it down," whined John, "I'll get some nails and fix it, but you can fuss all you want to and I ain't goin' to tear it down." "You better fix it then," Virginia told him, "or I's goin' to tell mama to make you take it off."

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John is the second oldest boy and to an average American boy in appearance. His hair is light brown, his eyes are blue and his body is straight and strong. He is healthy looking and is neatly though poorly dressed. His voice, as the rest of the family's, has a whining, plaintive note. He is usually busy doing something about the house, he keeps the yard neat and builds things of wood. He has a camera and likes to go down to the stores at Princeton and take pictures of any and all of the children there.

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I am not making much head way with Sarah as she always leaves Virginia and me to ourselves when I call. She is not at home very often. Last week and this, when the weather was cold, she spent most of the time with the daughter who married the merchant. This daughter, Minnie Dell, has a fire place in her new home so she comes each morning to get her mother and brings her home late in the afternoon.

One day this week, when I was visiting the Jones, Colombus, the oldest boy, came to the house with several other boys and told Virginia that "he had fixed at the store" for her to get something for supper. She tried to get him to go back and bring something for her to cook but he said that he had fixed it and that she could go get it herself. She then tried to find out what he would like to have but he couldn't be bothered with that either.

The problem of supper for the family was solved when Sarah came home with an arm full of green vegetables. She was told that Columbus had fixed it at the store" but she announced that she was cooking turnip greens and corn bread and nothing else was needed.

The bathroom facilities are non-existent. There is a pump in the back yard and a piece of tin, which has been bent to make a drain, keeps the water from falling too near the pipe.

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A toilet is set back in the pines some distance from the house. This was also built by John and is merely several pieces of tin nailed to trees that have conveniently grown so as to

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be used as corner posts on three corners. The other corner is a new 2 x 4. The door is another piece of tin which is not attached to the main body but has to be lifted up then replaced.

A seat is two more 2 x 4 posts which are placed on high boxes. There is no floor and the ground and seat are littered with many old newspapers. No attempt has been made to put a roof on this construction.

"We would build us a toilet," says Virginia, "but mama says that there ain't no sense in spendin' money for it when we might have to move and leave it. We didn't have to pay no rent here until after July but now the man that owns these houses makes us pay five dollars a month. He may be goin' to tear these houses down and build some new ones."

"He asked Mama if she would rent from him and she told him she would if he would make his rent reasonable but she wasn't goin' to pay no ten or fifteen dollars a month.

Virginia was still in bed one morning when I called at ten o'clock. She jumped up and put on a silk dress then got back in bed. (Virginia wears only silk dresses).

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There were two double all wool blankets and three quilts on her bed and she guessed her mother must have put the two top ones on her some time in the night. All of this covering is soiled and dingy. The sheets are not dirty but are also dingy and are of coarse material.

The hall was littered with trash which Sarah had swept up in a pile when the daughter had come for her earlier in the morning.

Virginia is very anxious to make a quilt before she is married but has not been able to get the material so I offered to buy the material for her if she will make a quilt for me. This suits her fine and the agreement is made. She is in raptures over it and gets to work. She is

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anxious to get the quilts finished and is going to quilt them with many little patterns which will be very difficult.

She is glad that the materials are washable as her sweet-heart has taken one of his mother's silk quilts for them to sit on at a fish fry. She knows that he will treat hers the same way and it will need frequent washings.

This sweet heart works at the ice factory and supports his mother, a married sister and her child. This takes almost all of his salary but he manages to buy Virginia's clothes. She is not ashamed of the fact and does not care what folks think about it. The only thing that worries her is that her clothes are not as nice as his mother's who also has a man to help support her and buy additional clothes.

I met Colombus at the grocery store and had a chance to study him. He is a tall, raw-boned boy, not too clean looking, with ruddy complexion, black straight hair and heavy, bushy eye-brows. He has a mullet mouth and dirty buck teeth. He wears a chauffeurs cap and a blue uniform shirt with the name CRIS sewed into the pocket. He smokes cigarettes and talks a great deal.

Colombus is employed to help a fisherman who has a fish market in Princeton and is frequently seen driving this fisherman's truck.

Virginia occupies the "Fine" bedroom and has many silk dresses hanging uncovered on a rod hung in one corner of the room. She bought the bedroom suite on the installment plan and declares that she will never buy anything else until she has the cash to pay for it as the installment man nearly ran her crazy trying to collect every week.

She has made her mother a present of this suite and hopes that she will be able to buy another when she is married but is afraid that her husband will not let her do so. He does not like to sleep on a bed that has a solid wooden head and foot as it is too stuffy.

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Virginia went to a dance at one of the notorious “Jukes” in the country. While there, she met a man who told her so many times that she was pretty, that he loved her and wanted to marry her and that it got so “bunotious” (Spelled an pronounced) that she could hardly stand it.

This family has no car and do not feel the need of one as they live so near to the stores that walking is no hardship. They say that they would not be able to buy gasoline for a car if they owned one. The mother walks a great deal and does most of the shopping.

The magazines on the hall table are True Romance, True Confessions and Ranch Romance.

In the front yard built against the house is a small pen which holds two large white rabbits. These are the property of the youngest boy and he feeds them Spanish Noodles.

As soon as Virginia has a quilt on the frame I am going to help with the quilting. Mrs. Jones is to take part in this, too, and I believe that I will be able to get the real background of this family.

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The father has high blood pressure and that keeps him in the Dade County Hospital. They never mention him.

The crocheting was progressing slowly but is forgotten now for the quilt. Virginia is planning to learn later as she wants to crochet a dress for her little niece. The crocheting is a joke with all of her family, and friends tease her about it.

The married daughters live about four miles from their mother, but in different directions.